

Young Workers

Lose out in

India's

Mobile Phone Industry



Learn more about  
Labour rights

Learn more about  
Social Security

Learn more about  
Company policies

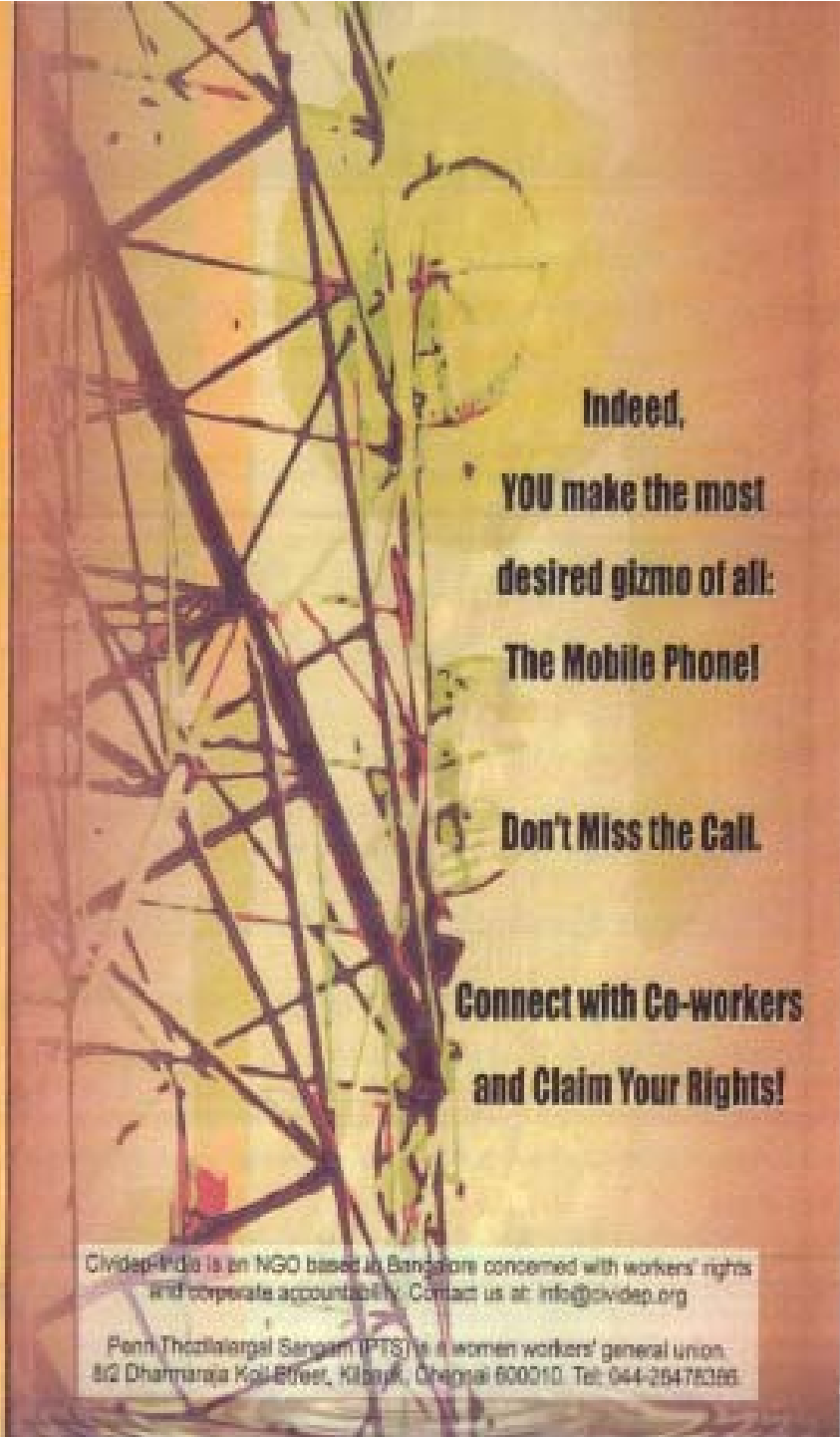
Participate in  
Work Councils

Protect Your  
Health

Be Prepared to Struggle  
for Your Rights



Remember the day  
you started work  
at the mobile phone factory?



Indeed,

**YOU** make the most

**desired gizmo of all:**

**The Mobile Phone!**

**Don't Miss the Call.**

**Connect with Co-workers**

**and Claim Your Rights!**

CividepIndia is an NGO based in Bangalore concerned with workers' rights and corporate accountability. Contact us at: [info@cividep.org](mailto:info@cividep.org)

Penn Thechilalergal Sangam (PTS) is a women workers' general union. 8/2 Dharmaraja Kollur Street, Kibera, Chennai 600010. Tel: 044-25475386

**Y**ou were excited and full of hope for your future. You liked the nice-looking campus and you were proud of being part of a growing modern industry!

**M**any of you have now completed one, or more years in the industry. Are your dreams of a bright career in the industry fulfilled? Or are you disappointed about your working conditions, your wages, your promotions, your training, your social security benefits?

**O**ur research in Sriperumbudur, meeting and interviewing workers, show that a large number of you are not satisfied with your employment. There is a large gap between what you expected and what you really got.

# Young Workers Speak Out

## PREGNANCY PENALIZED?

It's tough for pregnant women to work in the factory. The production targets are high and work is stressful. Working on shifts upsets the health of pregnant women more than others. Most women workers leave employment once they have a baby. It's callous of the company to be insensitive to the needs of women especially when 80 per cent of the workforce is female.

**Samathi** (Name changed)  
Worker, IME department

**Raman** (Name changed)  
25 years, Sifting Department

Youth from communities close to the SEZ are denied employment. These companies do business on the lands our forefathers once ploughed. Those few local youth who are employed are discriminated against. They want only migrant workers as they would be more docile due to their vulnerabilities.

## LOCAL YOUTH KEPT OUT

## USE and THROW

What worries us most is uncertainty of employment. I have seen people more qualified than me being dismissed. I have now worked for a year. I do not know when I will be dismissed too.

**Lakshmi** (Name changed)  
23 years, Assembly Department

## CHEATED ON WAGES

I had attended a 'Job Fair' conducted by a private employment agent in Dharmapuri recruiting for mobile phone companies. I was told there will be annual increment in wages and bonus. My monthly wages of Rs. 4000 is hardly sufficient to meet basic needs. We have no future and feel cheated.

**Selvam** (Name changed)  
24 years, Operator

**Jaya** (Name changed)  
22 years, Operator

Many of us in the production department have skin ailments like itching, eruptions and boils. Others have lower back pain, eye-irritation and joint pain. The factory does have some medical facilities. Yet, we are concerned about the lack of monitoring of our health as the toxics we work with could have long term disabling impacts.

## OUR HEALTH IS NOT THEIR CONCERN



## Why are workers disappointed?

Our research reveals some reasons for workers' dissatisfaction:

- Ⓢ No annual increments in wages.
- Ⓢ No share in profits in the form of annual bonus.
- Ⓢ No training in new skills and prospects of promotion. You are stuck in the jobs you joined.
- Ⓢ As you work with toxic material, careful documentation and monitoring of your health status is required. Companies are not serious about occupational health and safety.
- Ⓢ You have come from long distances to find work, but wages are not sufficient to pay rents, have nutritious food, save some money for future and to support parents.
- Ⓢ You don't get enough time for recreation and entertainment so that you can refresh yourselves.
- Ⓢ Unions are not allowed in most of the factories. Without experienced and responsible representatives of workers, how can you negotiate with the management?

## Awesome Companies Indifferent Social Policies

The mobile phone companies are huge multi-national enterprises with a lot of financial clout. Their technical and marketing competence is also remarkable. However, their approach to workers and the well-being of the community is disappointing!

Let us understand a little more about the industry and see how governments support them to succeed in business.

Do you know India will be producing nearly 95 million mobile phones by 2011 annually of a value of US \$ 15 billion? That is a whopping Rupees 7,50,00,00,000.

### Top five global companies

Nokia,  
Samsung,  
Motorola,  
Sony Ericsson,  
LG

produce mobile phones in India.

These are called Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs).

They are supported by Electronics Manufacturing Service (EMSs) like Flextronics, Elcoteq and Jabil. Component Suppliers like Aspocomp, Perlos, and Salcomp are also part of the production chain.

### State and Central Governments

They provided incentives for these companies.  
The Government of Tamil Nadu has exempted Nipal  
and other companies from paying  
sales tax, purchase tax, surcharges, trade tax

The land for these factories was acquired by  
government agencies,  
displacing thousands of farmers, farm workers and artisans.

When incentives are provided to companies  
the government foregoes revenue which could be used for  
better roads, schools, hospitals and other public services.

Are these companies returning at least a fraction of what  
they have taken from the communities and the  
governments? Are they providing enough decent jobs?

Are they concerned about the career and  
Skill-enhancement of young workers, paying living wages,  
ensuring that their health is not affected by the toxic  
material they handle?

Are they mindful of their impact on environment due to  
toxic wastes?

Do the thousands of rural people who lost their land when  
these factories came up have a sustainable livelihood  
today?

Most companies have Corporate Social Responsibility  
(CSR) policies where they commit to local and  
international laws as well as social and environmental  
standards.

How seriously do they practice these policies?

## What Should Workers Do?

**L**earn more about labour rights: Contact responsible  
trade unions and NGOs and they will be happy to tell  
you what your legal rights on wages, social security,  
health and safety etc are. Many labour laws are applicable to  
your factories like the Minimum Wages Act, Factories Act,  
Bonus Act, Leave and Holidays Act, Apprenticeship Act,  
Industrial disputes Act, Workmen's Compensation act. The  
company also has a responsibility to inform you about the laws  
that cover your employment.

**L**earn more about Social Security: The Provident Fund  
and Employees State Insurance are two pillars of your  
social security scheme. You can get more information on  
their websites and they have officers to educate workers like  
you about the schemes.

**L**earn more about company policies: Ask your managers  
for a copy of the company policies on labour issues. Also  
check your company's website and see whether what is  
said compares with reality on the shop floor.

**P**articipate in Work Councils: If your factory has  
workplace committees with whom the management  
consults, take active part and raise whatever issues  
important for workers.

**P**rotect Your Health: Co-operate with factory officials in  
following safety precautions like wearing masks and  
gloves. Read carefully the manuals provided by the  
factory. Ask for them if they are not given. Learn more about  
what measures are taken by the factory to ensure your health.

**B**e Prepared to Struggle for Your Rights: The 8-hour  
work-day and other benefits for workers were not given  
in charity. It was won by workers' struggles over  
centuries. Learn more about the workers movement and be  
proud to be part of it. This world has been built by the sweat  
and blood of workers like you.